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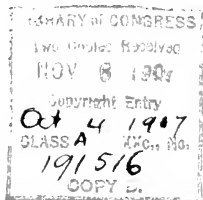
# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By SIR NOEL PATON



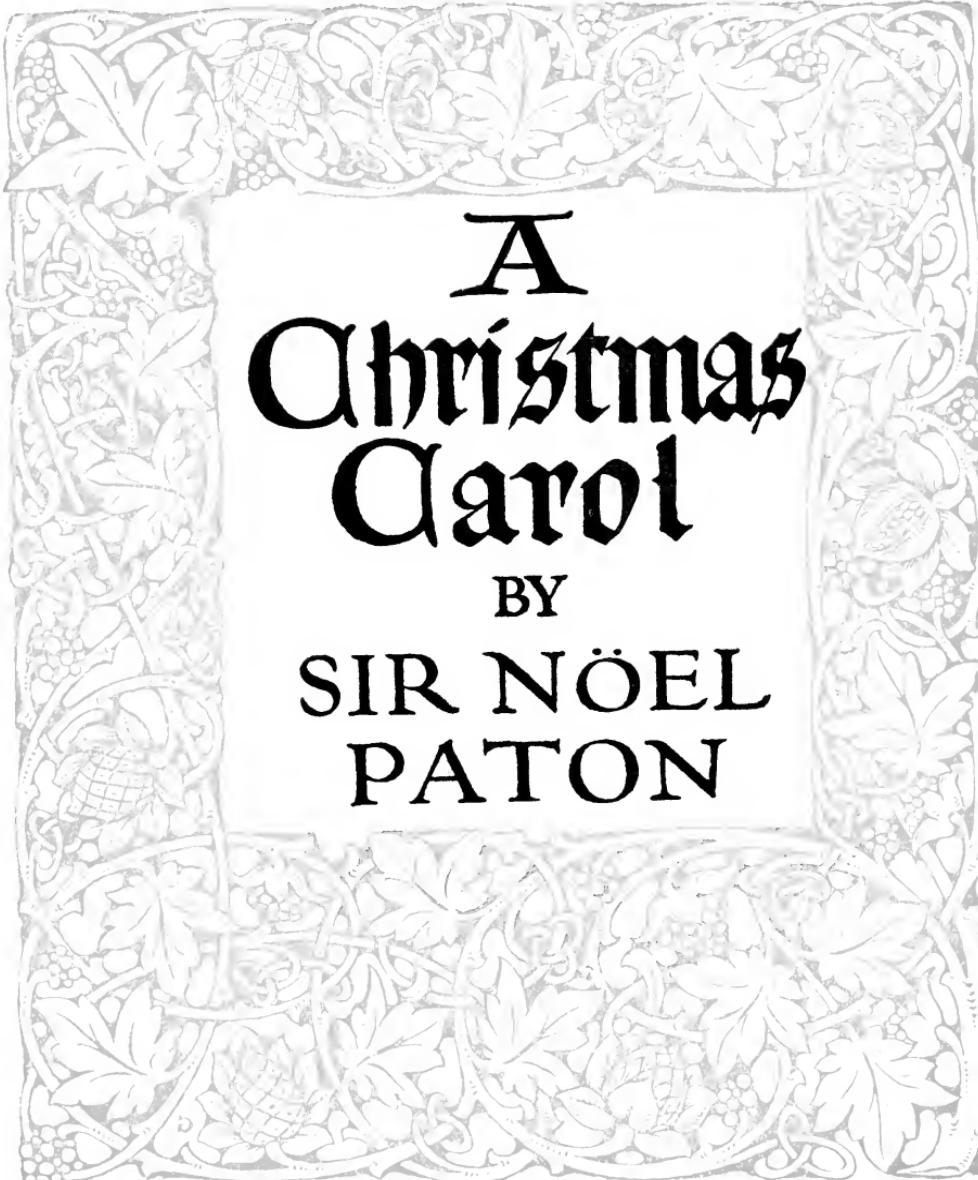
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**A  
Christmas  
Carol**

**BY  
SIR NÖEL  
PATON**

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL



T was the Christ-  
mas Eve;  
The homeless wind  
did grieve  
Around the desolate  
moorland, blind with snow;  
When at my wattle door—  
Shelter how frail and poor!  
I heard the sound of weeping—  
very low;  
And peering forth into the wild  
and dreary night—lo! on the  
threshold stood a child.



## II

His tiny feet were bare,  
The snow was in his hair,  
The snow was on his fluttering  
raggedness.

‘Pity a little one  
Out in the storm alone,’  
He feebly murmured in his  
sore distress.

Within my arms I gathered him,  
And bore with soothing words  
into my chamber dim.

### III

And as I bore him in,  
There came the silvery din  
    Of bells, far-chiming through  
    the fitful blore,  
And from his pallid brow  
A sweet light seemed to flow,  
    And from his tattered garment  
    wintry frore;  
While from his eyes a look there  
came  
Of love, that thrilled like fire through  
all my trembling frame.

#### IV

I laid him on my bed,  
And water brought and bread--  
    The last scant remnant of my  
    hermit fare,-  
Whereof he took, and slept;  
While by his side I kept  
    Dark vigil,--all my spirit bowed  
    in prayer,  
Towards the dawning of the morn  
Whereon our blessed Lord and  
Saviour, Christ, was born.

V

But, hungered and a-cold,  
Ere half my beads were told  
    The gentle boon of sleep to me  
    was given;  
And in a solemn dream  
I saw the wondrous gleam  
    Of that strange star high in the  
    Eastern heaven,  
That led the Magi on their way,  
What time the King of Kings  
within the manger lay.

## VI

I saw the Angel throng,  
Heard too the Heavenly song  
    Beside the shepherds in the  
    fields by night,  
And eager ran with them  
To where in Bethlehem  
    We found the Holy Babe in  
    swaddlings white;  
And, kneeling in the sacred place,  
I saw--and wept to see--in His  
my wanderer's face!

## VII

But they were tears of bliss,--

And bending low to kiss

In loving awe the rosy-tender  
feet--

The vision passed; and--strange!

What means this mystic change

On all that doth my rapt observ-  
ancemeet?

A blazing Yule-log on the hearth

Fills my late darksome cell with  
light and warmth and mirth!

## VIII

Upon my table bare  
A golden chalice fair  
    Shone brimmed with wine;  
    a golden paten held  
Bread broken; a pale Rood  
Beside them shadowy stood;  
    And from the patient eyes a great  
    love welled. . .  
I turned to rouse my sleeping one;  
But vacant stood the bed--and I  
was all alone.

## IX

I sank upon my knees,  
While once more on the breeze  
    The Christmas bells came  
        sounding joyously;  
And on a scroll o'erhead  
Written in light I read  
    The legend; 'Thou hast done it  
        unto Me!'  
And I forgot my sins and cares,  
For then I knew He had been with  
me unawares.

## X

And from that hour to this

My fire unquenched is;

By daily use unminished, on  
the board

Still stand the bread and wine;

And this poor cote of mine,

Yet radiant from the presence  
of the Lord,

Is a rich temple, where I bide

Awaiting His angel's summons,--

HIS whate'er betide.

## NOTE

This CAROL was written on Christmas Eve, 1882, and first published in *The New Amphion*, the book of the Edinburgh University Fancy Fair, 1886.







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